

REMARKS

I. Status of the Application

Claims 19-70 are presently pending in the application. Claims 37-70 are allowed. Claims 19, 23-26, 30-36 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,984,959 to Kato in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,982,127 to Matsubara et al and/or U.S. Patent No. 4,803,895 to Nishizawa. Claims 20, 27 and 28 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Kato in view of Matsubara, U.S. Patent No. 5,661,387 to Stadele et al, and/or Nishizawa. Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Kato in view of Nishizawa and Stadele. Claims 21-22, 29 are indicated as being allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 19 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner to include the limitations of allowable claim 21, and claim 21 has been canceled. Claim 22 has been amended to be dependent on claim 19. Claim 29 has been amended to include the limitations of base claim 19 and intervening claims 27, 28, and claims 27 and 28 have been canceled. New claims 71-84 have been added.

The foregoing amendments in view of the following remarks are believed to place all pending claims of this application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims 19-20, 22-26 and 29-84 as now submitted is respectfully requested.

II. Replacement Drawings Included

Attached are replacement sheets for FIGS. 5 and 7C, the changes for which were approved by the Examiner in the Office Action.

II. Claim 19 is in Proper Form

Claim 19 has been objected to on the grounds that the phrase “gripper” at line 3 should read “gripper part.” Claim 19 has been amended at line 2 to delete the term “part,” so that the phrase “gripper” is consistent throughout all the claims, and at line 8 to correct a typographical error, and is now believed to be in proper form.

III. Claims 19, 23-26, and 30-36 Are Nonobvious Over Kato and Matsubara

Claims 19, 23-26, 30-36 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,984,959 to Kato in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,982,127 to Matsubara et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 19 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 21, and, therefore, is believed to be proper form for allowance. Claims 23-26, and 30-36, each of which depends from claim 19, are believed to be allowable as well. Consequently, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

IV. Claims 20, 27, and 28 Are Nonobvious Over Kato, Matsubara, and Stadele

Claims 20, 27, and 28 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Kato in view of Matsubara and U.S. Patent No. 5,661,387 to Stadele et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Since claim 19 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 21, claim 20, which depends from claim 19, is believed to be in proper form for allowance. Claims 27 and 28 have been canceled. Accordingly, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

V. Claims 19, 23-26, and 30-36 Are Nonobvious Over Kato and Nishizawa

Claims 19, 23-26, 30-36 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Kato in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,803,895 to Nishizawa. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 19 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 21, and, therefore, is believed to be proper form for allowance. Claims 23-26, and 30-36, each of which depends from claim 19, are believed to be allowable as well. Consequently, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

VI. Claim 20 is Nonobvious over Kato, Nishizawa and Stadele

Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Kato in view of Nishizawa and Stadele. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Since claim 19 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 21, claim 20, which depends from claim 19, is believed to be in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

VII. Claims 20, 27, and 28 Are Nonobvious Over Kato, Nishizawa, Matsubara, and Stadele

Claims 20, 27, and 28 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Kato in view of Nishizawa, Matsubara and Stadele et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Since claim 19 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 21, claim 20, which depends from claim 19, is believed to be in proper form for allowance. Claims 27 and 28 have been canceled. Accordingly, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

VIII. New Claims 71-84 Are Allowable

New claim 71 is believed to be allowable over the cited art, and an indication to that effect is respectfully requested.

Since claim 29 is believed to be allowable, as discussed above, claims 72-84, which depend from independent claim 29, are believed to be allowable in their present form.

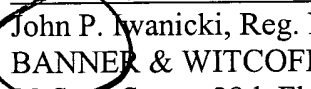
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, pending claims 19-20, 22-26 and 29-84 are believed to be allowable, and an indication to that effect from the Examiner is respectfully requested at this time. If a telephone conversation with applicant's attorney would expedite prosecution of the above-referenced application, the Examiner is urged to call the undersigned at the number below.

Please apply any required charges or credits to our Deposit Account No. 19-0733.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

January 12, 2004



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